

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

*Media Office
Democratic Caucus
John Schorg, Director
Statehouse, Room 157*

*Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
1-800-382-9842 or 1-317-232-9621
Fax Number: 1-317-232-9792*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

APRIL 11, 2005

CRAWFORD CO-SPONSORS BILLS TO HELP CHILDREN, REGULATE CIGARETTE SALES

INDIANAPOLIS – State Rep. William Crawford (D-Indianapolis) is the co-sponsor of four bills that were passed by the Indiana House today.

Senate Bill 379 deals with the delivery sales of tobacco products in an attempt to regulate the distribution of cigarettes in Indiana. The bill excludes cigars and pipe tobacco from the restrictions but would require cigarette importers and manufacturers to obtain licenses from the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission. The distributors, importers, manufacturers, and retailers who may sell and receive cigarettes are also specified. The bill was passed 95 - 2.

"Because of their increasing costs in Indiana, people have been smuggling cigarettes from Kentucky and are selling them here for lower rates," said Crawford. "This is illegal activity and Senate Bill 379 will help put a stop to it."

Senate Bill 340, legislation that addresses various issues dealing with adoption and child abuse, passed out of the House by a vote of 95 - 0. The bill focuses on how the courts and the state will deal with child in need of services (CHINS) issues and the proper procedure by which CHINS petitions are dismissed. Also, the bill requires certain non-identifying information about a child's birth parents to be given to the prospective adoptive parents.

"The safety of children is an issue that has been of great concern to me throughout my tenure in the House of Representatives," said Crawford. "This bill will focus the state's attention on how CHINS cases are addressed, which will be greatly beneficial to children under the state's care."

Another of Crawford's bills, Senate Bill 420, which passed 96 - 1, would expand guidelines for child care supervision and child caseworker caseload ratios. A child care home's address will no longer be allowed to be listed on the Division of Family and Children's Internet Web site and new requirements for continuous supervision in these homes are also defined. Guidelines for the maximum caseload ratios for child protection caseworkers are given as well.

"Indiana has seen a number of children suffer in the past few months due to the lack of regulations specifying caseload ratios for our child protection caseworkers," said Crawford. "We need to put these requirements in place so that we have a better chance of protecting our children."

Crawford is also working to protect children that are not under the care of the state. Senate Bill 376 will establish the Committee on Child Care, which will be responsible for providing high quality, affordable child care to the families of Indiana. The committee will also study different models of child care found in different states, the effect of child care on children and families and any reorganization or restructuring of governmental agencies that are responsible for regulating child care.

"Many parents in Indiana work and need to use child care facilities," said Crawford. "We need to make sure that not only are child care facilities in Indiana safe, but that we are using the most effective models for providing child care."

Because they were amended, Senate Bills 340 and 379 will be sent to a House-Senate Conference Committee. Senate Bills 376 and 420 will be sent directly to the governor for consideration.